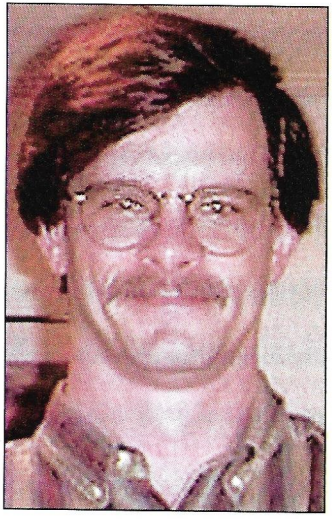
CONDUCTED BY PAT HARRIMAN
AP GENERAL MANAGER

Dean Belowich earns MMR 297

Dean Belowich grew up in New York State. Several things led to his interest in model railroading. First was a trip that his family made on the NYC and GN in 1967. Second, his father bought him an HO-scale train set when he was around 10. And finally, he previously had an N-scale set and a Marx set. With all of this his interest in trains and model railroads was sealed. While each of these scales brought hours of enjoyment, the HO seemed to appeal to him the most.

After a move to a new house, a second train set at Christmas added to his collection and before long, these grew into a "layout" on a 4x8 sheet of plywood over a pool table. A move to yet another house led to an "L" shaped layout—and an even larger collection. He began to paint his own equipment, do some kitbashing and even a little scratchbuilding. Once he graduated high school and started working, he began to be quite active in the local NRHS chapter. He also had more ability to pursue the hobby. Then he met Jim Heidt who, at the time, had just started and HO modular layout group in the Utica, NY area. This led to a great fellowship with many more modelers and an introduction to the NMRA through the Central New York Division of the NER, of which Jim was also the superintendent. Dean was also introduced to NMRA contests and the AP, though he was very green in both. His first contest entry, through Jim's encouragement, was at a joint Division meet, where he took first place for a kitbashed steam generator car in the non-revenue category. He attended his first NER convention with Jim, in Rockland, Maine, and ever since has enjoyed the camaraderie of these events.



Through more connections, he began to help a local man, Todd Roberts, with brass model production drawings and soon was working for the Coach Yard and Oriental Limited. A short stint with Front Range Products in Colorado, was followed by a move to South Carolina in 1985. There he met many more great modelers like Leon Butler, Warren Calloway, and Joe Oates. Soon after, Dean met Allen Pollock at a MRIA con-

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Achievement Program

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vention in Omaha, Nebraska and he was finally hooked—joining the NMRA in 1986. He began to attend more region conventions, this time in the SER and MER. He met even more great modelers and NMRA members like Bob Charles, Allan Phillips, Mike Callahan, Sam Swanson and Nate Stone. Through these individuals, he was inspired to begin active participation in the Achievement Program.

It has always been a learning experience and in each case criticism was taken back to the workbench and applied to the models, not taken as a personal attack. While there are great many people who have been an inspiration to his modeling, he can singularly point to Nate Stone, who has given constant encouragement and advice.

His Current layout, the Idaho Northwest, is a modern, HO logging operation set in northern Idaho/Montana. It loosely follows a Milwaukee Road. While he is modeling a branch off the mainline southeast from Avery, ID, the INW is meant as a successor to the Milwaukee Road from Washington State to South Dakota. It is a three level layout, with the upper level being completed this spring.

At 36, Dean works as a non-licensed Civil Engineer in coastal South Carolina and still works on brass model production drawings from time to time. He also does fine art painting of railroads and has several limited edition prints of his own work. He is currently the Contest Chairman for the Southeastern Region and very active in SER activities. After nine years of intense participation, he holds AP Certificates in Author, Chief Dispatcher, Master Builder—Cars, Master Builder—Locomotives, Association Volunteer, Model Railroad Engineer—Electrical and Master Builder—Scenery.

Dean says participating in the AP, as well as NMRA contests, has been very rewarding and achieving Master Model Railroader, while not an easy task, has been more than worth the effort. He would encourage all those young modelers to pick up a copy of *The Bulletin,* or even *MR* or *RMC*, and see layouts built by Whit Towers, Allen McClelland and Bruce Chubb to work on their skills. "No objective is unattainable, even MMR. It will not be quick and it will not be easy—but it will be rewarding—and the friends you make, the skills you learn, and the results you see, will be more than worth all the time and effort," he said.